

Serial No.: 10/511,691
 Case No.: 20974YP
 Page 2

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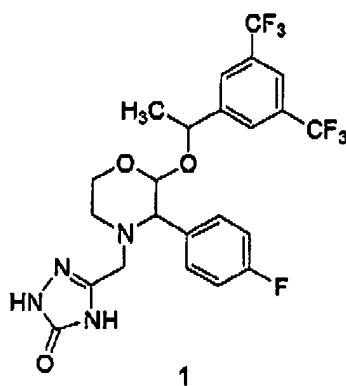
AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

Please amend Claims 15-27 as follow.

Listing of Claims:

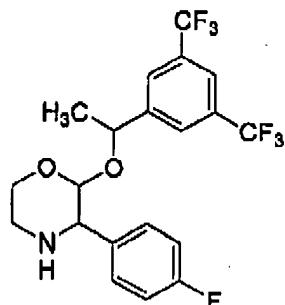
Claims 1-14. (canceled)

15. (Previously presented) A process for preparing a compound of the formula 1:



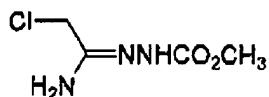
comprising:

reacting the hydrochloride salt of a compound of formula 2:



2

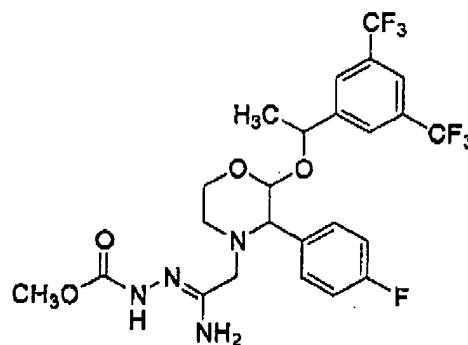
in the presence of an inorganic base and toluene with a compound of the formula 3:



3

Serial No.: 10/511,691
Case No.: 20974YP
Page 3

to produce a compound of the formula 4:



4

and cyclizing the compound of formula 4 at a temperature of 140-150°C to give the compound of formula 1.

16. (Currently amended) The process of Claim 15 wherein the compound of formula 2 is reacted with the compound of formula 3 in the presence of an inorganic base, toluene and a polar-aprotic solvent which is selected from the group consisting of: dimethylformamide, dimethylsulfoxide, N-methylpyrrolidone, acetonitrile, N,N-dimethylacetamide and hexamethylphosphoramide.

17. (Canceled)

18. (Currently amended) The process of Claim 17 16 wherein the polar aprotic solvent is dimethylformamide or dimethylsulfoxide

19. (Previously presented) The process of Claim 15 further comprising washing the compound of formula 4 prior to cyclization with an aqueous phase.

20. (Previously presented) The process of Claim 19 wherein the aqueous phase is comprised of an aqueous salt solution

Serial No.: 10/511,691
Case No.: 20974YP
Page 4

21. (Previously presented) The process of Claim 20 wherein the aqueous salt solution contains at least one compound selected from the group consisting of: KCl, KHCO₃, K₂CO₃, Na₂CO₃, NaHCO₃ and NaCl.

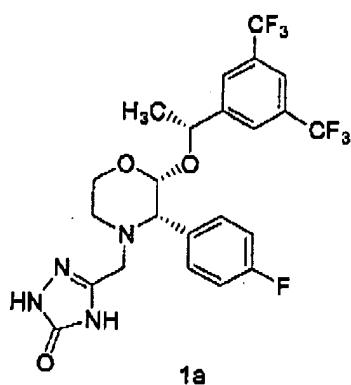
22. (Previously presented) The process of Claim 21 wherein the aqueous salt solution contains KCl.

23. (Previously presented) The process of Claim 15 further comprising drying prior to cyclization.

24. (Previously presented) The process of Claim 15 wherein the inorganic base is selected from the group consisting of: sodium carbonate, cesium carbonate, sodium hydroxide, potassium hydroxide and potassium carbonate.

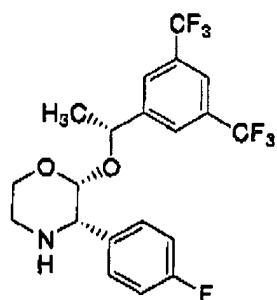
25. (Previously presented) The process of Claim 24 wherein the inorganic base is potassium carbonate.

26. (Previously presented) The process of Claim 15 wherein the compound of formula 1 is a compound of the formula 1a:



Serial No.: 10/511,691
Case No.: 20974YP
Page 5

27. (Previously presented) The process of Claim 16 wherein the compound of the formula 2 is a compound of the formula 2a:



2a